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Social Tendencies of the Times.

It is cheering to the heart of the philanthropist to contemplate the social tendencies of the present age. That "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the earth," in peace and fraternal concord, seems to be the revelation of science as well as inspiration. It is a truth self-evident, and self-working out of every thing in nature and art. It is the supplement of that other truth, to be written yet on all the handiwork of man, "Holiness to the Lord." The Devil's private signet is to be taken off from human ingenuity, and mechanism, and things made of iron and steel, shall be made to save life, not to destroy it, as when all the mechanical genius of the world was expressed in the machinery of murder. The plow-share is yet to come out with illustrious divinity, over all martial instruments, and iron giants, that can "pluck up the seated hills," shall be **PEACE MAKERS**, and wear on their frontispieces, "God hath made of one blood all nations of men," as they walk over the seas and the dry land. With their long arms, they shall seat distant nations side by side and face to face, and, with the great speech of their steam lungs, tell them that they are brethren. And ponderous bars of railroad iron shall corroborate their brotherhood, bridging deep, black abysses of "natural enmity" and international hatred; strapping hostile countries together, and taking out of boundaries and air-line limits their malignant nationality. To the seer who saw in his prophetic vision, a better day for humanity, it was revealed, as the dawning light of that day, that "many should run to and fro and knowledge be increased" on the earth. This day has this gospel commenced to be fulfilled in our sight. Such a running to and fro as the prophet could scarcely have comprehended, has begun to fraternize the nations of Christendom. And kings and queens are coming to be the nursing fathers and mothers of this social movement. It is well that they, too, have begun to run to and fro, and to have their knowledge increased of great facts, pertaining to the welfare of mankind, and the everlasting peace and prosperity of their subjects. This interchange of social visits among the leading sovereigns of Europe, is the most impressive development of the times. It is more than a Congress of nations for the prevalence of universal peace, for it tends, not only to adjust, but to prevent questions of international controversy. It throws its sweetening leaf of peace into the heart-fountains of national character and existence, purifying their issues in the source and acting as a prevention rather than a remedy.

Scipio's Prayer for Vengeance.

SCIPIO AFRICANUS was the commander of the Roman army when Carthage was destroyed; and the following was his prayer on that occasion:—

"O dreadful Pluto! let terror and vengeance loose against the Carthaginians! May the cities and people who have taken up arms against us be destroyed! To you, O ye Furies, in my name, and in the name of the senate and Roman people, I devote all the enemies of my republic."

Millot, in his "Elements of General History," after mentioning the flourishing city of Carthage, as "given up to slaughter and buried in flames"

by the Romans, has this remark :—" But what above all shocks human nature is, to see them sanctifying all the horrors of war by the ceremonies of religion. They solemnly devoted their enemies to their infernal gods, and Scipio performed the ceremony."—The historian then adds,—“ Such imprecations might undoubtedly increase the military ardor and confidence of the soldiers ; but how dreadfully shocking must they be to the feeling heart ! ” If it be so “ shocking to the feeling heart ” to read this pagan prayer, and to observe the Roman manner of “ sanctifying all the horrors of war by religious ceremonies,”—how shocking must it be to reflect on the *constancy* and *inconsistency* with which Christians have imitated these pagan examples. —We say the constancy ;—for in all wars of Christians, from the reign of Constantine to this day, they have associated “ the horrors of war with religious ceremonies ; ” and each party in a contest has prayed for the destruction of the other. We say the inconsistency, for two reasons :—*First*. Christians profess a religion which positively forbids the indulgence of warring passions,—ambition,—avarice, hatred and revenge. It requires them to love one another,—to love even their enemies, not rendering evil for evil, but blessing them that curse, doing good to those who hate and persecute them, and praying for their forgiveness, as they would hope for the forgiveness of God. Yet professed Christians have not only made war on each other, but have attempted to “ sanctify all the horrors,” and even all the crimes “ of war by religious ceremonies ! ” Not indeed the ceremonies of the bloody and revengeful religion of pagans, but the ceremonies of the benign and peaceful religion of Jesus Christ !—*Second*. While Christians have indulged the sanguinary pagan spirit of war, and prayed for vengeance and destruction on one another, they have not, like the pagans of Rome, addressed these prayers to *Pluto*, but to the merciful FATHER of all ; and to complete the climax of inconsistency, they have offered these prayers for vengeance in the name of the PRINCE OF PEACE, “ who died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,”—and who, with his dying breath, prayed for the forgiveness of his murderers !

Is it possible to conceive of inconsistency more glaring, or more revolting to the benevolent and reflecting mind, than what has now been exhibited ? And does not the honor of our religion require, that Christians should either renounce the pagan spirit of war, and cease to pray for the destruction of one another, or offer these prayers to *Pluto*, and not to the God of love and peace.

Such infernal beings as Pluto and the Furies were supposed to be, might be pleased with such prayers. But what can be more absurd than to suppose that such murderous effusions or imprecations can be acceptable to the benevolent God, who extends mercy not only to the good, but to the evil and unthankful ? And what better character than that of the infernal Pluto do Christians impute to God, while they imagine that he is pleased with their indulgence of warring passions, their hatred one to another, and their prayers for vengeance and destruction ? All who read and believe the gospel, are taught that our heavenly Father is far more benevolent than any earthly parent. But where in this world can be found a *good parent* who could be pleased in seeing his children divided into hostile parties, seeking each other's blood, and mutually calling on him for aid to enable them to murder one another !

“ 'Tis universal soldiership has stabbed
The heart of merit in the meaner class.
Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage
Of those that bear them, in whatever cause,
Seem most at variance with all mortal good,
And incompatible with serious thought.”—*Cowper*.